

CAUCUS REPUDIATES TARIFF DEBATE GAG

Failure to Adopt Cloture
Rule Forecasts Final De-
feat Wednesday.

DEFENDERS AGITATED

Hostility of Large Business
Interests to Measure
Disconcerts Them.

SOUND BASIS WANTED

Movement to Take Politics Out
of Economics Is Increas-
ing in Congress.

By LOUIS SEIBOLD.

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New York Herald Bureau.
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Politicians and business men agree that the Fordney-McCumber tariff bill has done more to encourage agitation for "taking politics out of the tariff" than any economic measure proposed in Congress.

The most significant feature of the movement in this direction is that it appears to be genuinely non-partisan or rather bi-partisan, for it has found supporters in both parties.

Support of the plan has come from representatives of big business, which is generally supposed to favor an orthodox protective tariff policy of the most prohibitory and reactionary order.

The charge made by Chairman McCumber and a few associates who attempt to defend his bill that the sole opposition to it comes from importers and big business men generally is unwarranted. Senators Simmons (N. C.) and Underwood (Ala.), the joint authors of the Democratic measure now in operation, have presented unmistakable proof in debates that the opposition, that "economic bludgeon" framed by Mr. McCumber, is not confined to importers and department stores and newspapers of large cities.

Condemnation Is Widespread.

The record is sprinkled with editorial condemnation of the bill, which was framed to help out individual Senators seeking reelection. These criticisms come from newspapers in agricultural and small factory towns as well as the large industrial cities of the country.

In the discussions in previous tariff measures the critics of the bills asserted that the Republican tariff policy was dictated by big business. In the case of the Fordney-McCumber bill, however, the opposition has come mainly from the men who conduct the large business enterprises of the country, ordinarily classed as favoring the maximum tariff protection.

This was clearly emphasized by the attention paid to the recent declaration of spokesmen for the most important steel concerns in favor of a non-partisan and scientific tariff law. The policy advocated by these recognized representatives of "big business" has made a pronounced impression on the Senators of both parties.

Bill's Defenders Disconcerted.

Coupled with the opposition of the leading newspapers in agricultural as well as in industrial centers, the attitude of important business interests have greatly disconcerted the defenders of the Fordney-McCumber bill.

The growth of the plan to bring the politics out of the tariff—which is not new by any means—probably had something to do with the failure of the Republican party caucus to-day to put through a resolution favoring a cloture rule for limiting debate. Such pronounced opposition has developed in this scheme of Mr. McCumber and the more ardent reactionary tariff Senators for jamming through the pending measure that it has practically

been abandoned, although final action has been deferred till Wednesday.

Recognized authorities on economic subjects who have communicated their view—generally hostile—on the Fordney-McCumber bill accord to the authors of that measure the credit for having centered the attention of the country squarely upon the increasingly popular plan of "taking politics out of the tariff" by according scientific instead of political treatment.

Inquiry among Republican Senators reveals that there was very little science employed in the making of the Fordney-McCumber measure. The inspiration of the scheme followed by the Ways and Means Finance Committees of the two houses was to provide as much protection as influential members of these two bodies demanded for reasons that were largely political or personal and not those dictated by economic necessities.

Did Not Use Valuable Material.

Little or no attention was paid to the work of the Tariff Commission, which was created for the very purpose described by Judge Gary to the steel men. The fact is the framers of the Fordney-McCumber bill did not take advantage of the valuable material assembled by the Tariff Commission for use in development of a permanent economic policy based on scientific principles.

Some illuminating and potentially valuable information has been gathered by the commission since it was created on the recommendation of President Wilson in 1914. The war, of course, prevented the application of the correctives disclosed by the investigations of the commission.

The material gathered during the war and since could, in the opinion of leading authorities in economics, be now employed in the production of a tariff measure based on sound principles and fair dealing. A scrutiny of the work of the commission reveals that business men generally favor a scientific tariff over one based mainly on partisan necessities of a political character.

Many business men in communicating to the commission statements regarding their respective industries have expressed their approval of the scheme to "take politics out of the tariff." The extent of this recent tendency on the part of business men is probably not appreciated by members of the two houses of Congress, who regard the tariff as a political affair pure and simple.

Commission Neglected.

The commission has received little, if any, support or encouragement toward accomplishing the task for which it was created. The present commission is composed of three Republicans, two Democrats and one Independent as far as politics have been observed by the appointing power.

Many commission does not possess the power to recommend rates, because Congress has always been jealous of its political prerogatives in framing measures relating to the tariff. There has been commendable change in sentiment, however, in this respect. Senator Smoot (Utah), who originally opposed the tariff commission idea, is now an advocate of the plan to take politics out of economic legislation.

Congress has carried its resentment against the scientific tariff scheme to the extent of actually crippling the commission in the matter of funds. The largest appropriation ever granted for the maintenance of the commission was \$325,000, which has been agreed upon for the present year.

The inadequacy of this appropriation is shown by the fact that the Tariff Commission's work embraces minute investigations of every indus-

try great and small in the United States and all other countries. Yet the Federal Trade Commission, the work of which is confined to one particular branch of American industry, received in the neighborhood of \$3,000,000.

Staff Limitation Shown.

On the entire chemical schedule the Tariff Commission has only three experts at work; on metals and metal manufactures, only four; on all textiles, including wool, cotton and other fibers manufactured thereof, only four; on the entire agricultural schedule only four and only one man on sugar, paper and lumber industries combined.

In spite of this handicap the commission has already performed an enormous amount of work. It recently published a 1,600 page classified and indexed summary of tariff information relating to the present bill. It has in the press the first digest ever attempted by any Government of the commercial treaties of every nation in the world in a 1,000 page volume.

It has just completed a history of "The Colonial Tariff Policies of the World," something never before attempted and of pertinent interest at this time because it gives full information regarding the preferential rates between the various portions of the British Empire, which is of particular interest to the United States in the present world contest for trade.

In addition to these publications it has published a long list of other reports covering every conceivable subject relating to the tariff. Two important recommendations have been made by the commission up to date. One is for the establishment of free zones, or free ports, in the United States and the other for an interim tariff provision. Neither of these so far has been embodied in any measure proposed in Congress by either political party.

Distributing Project.

Under the former it proposed the marking out of certain zones at ports of entry within which foreign articles might be imported free of duty and manufactured or assembled for export, thus increasing the importance of the United States as a distributing nation and giving employment to American citizens.

The proposal for interim legislation is that whenever tariff rates are proposed in a new bill recommended by the Ways and Means Committee of the House it shall go into effect at the time it is proposed, subject to change when the legislation has been completed by Congress. This is the plan followed in other countries to prevent importers from taking advantage of the situation which arises whenever it is proposed to change tariff rates.

For example, the commission points out that whenever it becomes apparent that Congress is about to increase tariff rates importers who can command large capital bring in large quantities of foreign goods in time to get them "under the wire" before passage of the bill.

The commission has pointed out that the sort of "hearings" held by Congressional committees on the tariff under the present system are to a great extent useless, because the information given under such circumstances is from biased sources—manufacturers on the one side, who want the highest rate of duty, and importers on the other, who want no duty at all. Both of these, of course, have their own selfish ends in view.

The result is that these legislative hearings have practically no effect whatever in influencing members of Congress in their votes on tariff rates because they are always discounted.

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